

153 FERC ¶ 62,023  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION

Wisconsin Public Service Corporation

Project Nos. 2522-122, 2546-  
116, 2560-114,  
2581-076, 2595-  
140,

ORDER AMENDING APPROVED WATER QUALITY MONITORING PLANS

(Issued October 13, 2015)

1. On September 4, 2015, the Wisconsin Public Service Corporation (licensee) filed a request with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (Commission) to amend the approved Water Quality Monitoring Plans for the Johnson Falls Project (FERC No. 2522), Sandstone Rapids Project (FERC No. 2546), Potato Rapids Project (FERC No. 2560), Peshtigo Project (FERC No. 2581), and High Falls Project (FERC No. 2595). The projects are located on the Peshtigo River in Marinette and Oconto counties, Wisconsin.

LICENSE REQUIREMENTS AND BACKGROUND

2. Article 406 of the licenses for the High Falls, Potato Rapids, and Peshtigo Projects, and Article 407 of the Johnson Falls and Article 408 of the Sandstone Rapids Project licenses require the licensee to monitor dissolved oxygen (DO) at the respective projects according to the parameters outlined in the license.

3. The licensee currently monitors water quality at all of the projects according to the plans approved by the Order Amending Water Quality Monitoring Plans (2002 Order) issued April 30, 2002.<sup>1</sup> The 2002 Order requires the licensee to monitor pH, DO, and water temperature upstream and downstream of each project at one hour intervals continuously for the months of June, July, August, and September once every 5 years using Hydrolab Datasonde Equipment or equivalent, except for downstream of High Falls Project which is monitored annually. The 2002 Order also requires the licensee to recalibrate the equipment once every 7 to 10 days. Hydrolab Datasonde Equipment functions using membrane technology to measure DO which is subject to biofouling of the membrane.

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<sup>1</sup> 99 FERC ¶ 62,082.

4. The Cauldron Falls Project (FERC No. 2525) was also included in the 2002 Order, but its water quality monitoring plan was amended separately in 2012. The licensee monitors water quality at the Caldron Falls Project according to the Order Amending Water Quality Monitoring Plan<sup>2</sup> issued April 23, 2012 (2012 Order). The licensee stated that the intention of their September 2015 amendment application is to harmonize the monitoring plans for the six projects along the Peshtigo River.

#### LICENSEE'S PROPOSAL

5. The licensee is proposing to amend its Water Quality Monitoring Plans to: (1) modify the frequency of monitoring equipment maintenance at the High Falls, Johnson Falls, Sandstone Rapids, Potato Rapids, and Peshtigo Hydroelectric Projects from once every seven to ten days to once every 14 days; (2) modify the monitoring plans to reflect the use of equipment manufactured by YSI, Inc. rather than Hydrolab brand equipment, and; (3) at the Potato Rapids Hydroelectric Project, modify monitoring at the upstream monitoring location from continuously during the monitoring season to conducting bi-monthly DO, pH, and temperature profiles near the powerhouse intake. All other parameters of the plans were previously approved in the 2002 Order, and are proposed to be the same. The licensee's filings included updated water quality monitoring plans for each project to reflect the requested changes.

#### CONSULTATION

6. On July 21, 2015, the licensee provided the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) (collectively, resource agencies) the updated water quality monitoring plans for review. On July 21, 2015, FWS stated by email that they had no comments. On July 23, 2015, WDNR provided the licensee with one comment requesting to alter the upstream monitoring profile at Potato Rapids to sample every 0.5 meter instead of 1 meter in order to provide a more detailed assessment of change over time in a sampling year and from a year to year perspective. The licensee incorporated this request into the plan.

#### DISCUSSION

7. The use of the newer YSI equipment will allow the licensee to utilize optical dissolved oxygen technology instead of the older membrane based technology. The optical technology is not as subject to biofouling and subsequent calibration drift as membrane technology. Utilizing the optical technology allows the licensee to calibrate the instruments less often while ensuring greater accuracy in the collected data. The proposal to modify the Potato Rapids Project Plan to conduct monitoring at the upstream

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<sup>2</sup> 139 FERC ¶ 62,055.

monitoring location from continuously during the monitoring season to conducting it bi-monthly will allow the licensee to harmonize it with the plans for the other projects. Furthermore, the requests are supported by FWS and WDNR.

8. Similar to the plans as approved in 2002, the licensee is required to file a report with the Commission by February 28 of the year following data collection. The next data collection year is 2016, thus the report is due to the Commission by February 28, 2017. In the past the licensee has included Caldron Falls in the report for all 6 Peshtigo River Projects, and should continue to do so.

9. The Commission should reserve authority to modify the water quality monitoring plans based on the data contained in the reports. The licensee's request is reasonable and will fulfill the purpose of the license articles to provide for monitoring of water quality at the licensee's projects, and therefore should be approved.

The Director orders:

(A) The Wisconsin Public Service Corporation's (licensee) request to amend the Water Quality Monitoring Plans approved by the Order Amending Water Quality Monitoring Plan issued April 30, 2002, for the Johnson Falls Project (FERC No. 2522), Sandstone Rapids Project (FERC No. 2546), Potato Rapids Project (FERC No. 2560), Peshtigo Project (FERC No. 2581), and High Falls Project (FERC No. 2595), filed on September 4, 2015, pursuant to license Article 406 of the High Falls, Potato Rapids, and Peshtigo Projects; Article 407 of the Johnson Falls Project; and Article 408 of the Sandstone Rapids Project, is approved.

(B) The Commission reserves the right to modify the water quality monitoring plans based on available information and data contained in the licensee's water quality monitoring reports.

(C) This order constitutes final agency action. Any party may file a request for rehearing of this order within 30 days from the date of its issuance, as provided in section 313(a) of the Federal Power Act, 16 U.S.C. § 8251 (2012), and the Commission's regulations at 18 CFR § 385.713 (2015). The filing of a request for rehearing does not operate as a stay of the effective date of this order, or of any other date specified in this order. The licensee's failure to file a request for rehearing shall constitute acceptance of this order.

Thomas J. LoVullo  
Chief, Aquatic Resources Branch  
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and Compliance

Document Content(s)

p-2522-122.DOC.....1-3